

Winter Weather Awareness Week

Winter is approaching. Hazardous weather can strike with little notice. Tornadoes strike with unwanted regularity. As winter approached two years ago, Tennesseans experienced the secondary severe weather maximum at its worst with the Veterans Day Tornado outbreak. Severe thunderstorms with downburst winds and large hail occur even more frequently. Floods and flash floods can wash people and property away with little notice.



Summer has ended, and fall is here. The National Weather Service and the State Emergency Management Agencies would like to bring another weather threat to the forefront and heighten everyone's awareness of this significant weather threat – Winter Weather.

Last winter was a little nearer to normal there were two snow events across the Mid South. February 15th saw a snowstorm move across Northern Mississippi and the southern portions of West Tennessee where portions of Hardeman, McNairy and Chester Counties received with 4 to 6 inches of snow in many areas.

The spring of 2004 may remember as the latest that measurable snow fell over portions of southwest Tennessee. On April 13th, between 2 and 4 inches fell east of the Memphis metropolitan area. The latest measurable snowfall in Jackson, TN previous to this event was April 5th, 1971. The snow made for slick driving conditions for the morning commute. There were reports of scattered power outages because of the weight of the heavy snow brought power lines down. Many schools and businesses were forced to close.

During January 1994 we saw many areas of the Mid South experience a major ice storms People were inconvenienced, injured or with one fatality at Memphis State University.

Even without snow or ice, intense cold can injure or kill before a person is aware they are at risk. Fatalities from hypothermia have occurred in air temperatures of 40 - 50 degrees. Persons with certain chronic health conditions and those over 65 are more at risk for hypothermia, **even within the home.**

One hazard we do not often associate with winter is flooding. Floods occur when too much rain or melted snow fill river or creek basins too quickly. Along Tennessee's rivers and streams, flooding is a natural part of life and most common during winter and early spring. Frozen ground, sparse vegetation, and less evaporation are all factors that allow water to run off the land and reach the rivers quickly during the cold months.

The National Weather Service in Memphis and the Tennessee State Emergency Management Agency will highlight November 16th-18th to bring these hazards to the attention of the public. We will be sending information through our communications network including the National Weather Service's NOAA Weather Radio during this period. We hope you will all join in this effort to make this the safest winter possible.

A Word on the Mid South Weather

Winter in the Mid South and the surrounding area can vary considerably from month to month or even week to week. Our winters can be cold with temperatures falling well below zero to relatively warm. Snowfall varies from a few inches during a winter to over one foot.

Freezing rain can devastate much of the area within a few hours.

Flooding can be very significant event during these months.

During this year's Winter Weather Awareness Week, we at the National Weather Service and the Tennessee Emergency Management Agency want to emphasize the importance of being prepared and planning ahead For these winter events.

It is important to know about the impending weather, particularly when traveling. You also should know the proper actions to take to ensure you and your family will be safe.

You can download the PDF pamphlet in the downloads section (registration required). The material included in the pamphlet will aid you in determining the proper planning, preparation and planning to take.